

CLAIMS

We claim:

- 5 1. A method of managing contact events across an enterprise, comprising:
- a. in response to a contact event, actuating a contact management
 system having control over a primary contact library;
- 10 b. under control of the contact management system, retrieving
 information associated with the contact event from the primary
 contact library;
- c. if new information is associated with the contact event, updating,
 based on the new information and under the control of the contact
 management system, the information associated with the contact
 event in the primary contact library; and
- 15 d. disseminating, to at least a portion of the enterprise, the updated
 information associated with the contact event.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising processing the contact event
 according to at least one predetermined rule.
- 20 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the processing comprises executing at
 least one command in response to the contact event.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the at least one command belongs to the
25 group consisting of: responding to the contact event, assigning the contact
 event to at least one user associated with the enterprise, spawning at
 least one process within a system belonging to the enterprise, launching
 at least one server-based process, and a combination thereof.
- 30 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the contact event belongs to the group
 consisting of: a telephone call, a fax transmission, a pager message, an

electronic text message, a still image communication, a video communication, an audio communication, a voice communication, an office visit, a paper-based communication, and any combination thereof.

- 5 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the information associated with the contact event is uniquely identifiable by an associated plurality of parameters.
- 10 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the associated plurality of parameters comprise text, at least one flag, at least one code, or a predetermined combination thereof.
- 15 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the disseminating is performed according to a method belonging to the group consisting of: real-time updating, updating based on a predetermined schedule, updating based on a random schedule, on-demand updating, updating based on feasibility, and a combination thereof.
- 20 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the contact management system comprises:
- a. a primary server;
 - b. at least one client station capable of interacting with the primary server to exchange information; and
 - c. a primary contact manager software application executing on the
- 25 primary server and capable of managing the primary contact library.
- 30 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the primary server and each of the at least one client station can operatively interact according to a communication mode selected from the group consisting of: wired, wireless, and a combination thereof.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein each of the at least one client station can operatively interact with the primary server across a network selected from the group consisting of: a local-area network (LAN), a wide-area network (WAN), a virtual private network (VPN), a cellular network, a wireless network, a wired network, the internet, an intranet, and a combination thereof.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein the primary server can operatively interact with a user to exchange information.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the primary contact manager provides a user interface to enable the user to interact with the primary server and exchange information.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the user interface provides information about how to contact an entity, the information including at least one item selected from the group consisting of: telephone number, electronic mail address, office address, pager number, office address, fax number, any information representative of a means to contact an entity, and a combination thereof.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the user interface comprises:

- a. a display panel; and
- b. a plurality of virtual menu panels arranged, according a predetermined order, on the display panel.

16. The method of claim 15, further allowing the user to customize the predetermined order of the virtual menu panels on the display panel.

17. The method of claim 15, furthering allowing the user to actuate at least one of the virtual menu panels.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein each of the virtual menu panels is functionally associated with at least one aspect of managing contact information.

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19. The method of claim 13, wherein the primary contact manager allows the user to input security information, upon which input of the security information the primary server defines the scope of the user's access authorization.

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20. The method of claim 19, wherein the scope includes viewing contact information.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the scope includes managing contact information.

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22. The method of claim 9, wherein the contact management system comprises a plurality of client stations.

23. The method of claim 13, wherein at least one of the plurality of client stations can operatively interact with at least one other of the plurality of client stations to exchange information.

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24. The method of claim 23, wherein at least one of the plurality of client stations can operatively interact with at least one other of the plurality of client stations according to a communication mode selected from the group consisting of: wired, wireless, and a combination thereof.

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25. The method of claim 23, wherein at least one of the plurality of client stations can operatively interact with at least one other of the plurality of client stations across a network selected from the group consisting of: a

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local-area network (LAN), a wide-area network (WAN), a virtual private network (VPN), a cellular network, a wireless network, a wired network, the internet, an intranet, and a combination thereof.

- 5 26. The method of claim 9, wherein each of the at least one client station is selected from the group consisting of: a personal computer, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a tablet computer, a handheld computing device, a wireless telephone, a wireless paging device, a wireless communication device, a notebook computer (laptop), a network-ready stationary data management device, a network-ready mobile data-management, and a combination thereof.
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27. The method of claim 9, wherein at least one of the at least one client station can operatively interact with a user to exchange information.
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28. The method of claim 9, wherein at least one of the at least one client station includes a client server.
29. The method of claim 28, wherein a client contact manager executes as a software application on the client server.
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30. The method of claim 29, wherein the client contact manager controls a client-side contact library.
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31. The method of claim 30, wherein the client contact manager can integrate with the primary contact manager and operatively interact with the primary contact manager to exchange information.
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32. The method of claim 31, wherein the primary contact manager and the client contact manager reconcile information contained in the primary

contact library with the associated information contained in the client contact library.

5 33. The method of claim 32, wherein the client user interface provides information about how to contact an entity, the information including at least one item selected from the group consisting of: telephone number, electronic mail address, office address, pager number, office address, fax number, any information representative of a means to contact an entity, and a combination thereof.

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34. The method of claim 32, wherein the client contact manager provides a client user interface to enable the user to interact with the client server.

15 35. The method of claim 34, wherein the client user interface comprises:
a. a client display panel; and
b. a plurality of client virtual menu panels arranged, according a predetermined order, on the client display panel.

20 36. The method of claim 34, wherein client user interface comprises an audio interface selected from the group consisting of: a microphone, a speaker, and a combination thereof.

25 37. The method of claim 35, further allowing the user to customize the predetermined order of the client virtual menu panels on the client display panel.

38. The method of claim 35, furthering allowing the user to actuate at least one of the client virtual menu panels.

39. The method of claim 35, wherein each of the client virtual menu panels is functionally associated with at least one aspect of managing contact information.

5 40. The method of claim 35, wherein the client user interface serves as a front-end interface to the primary contact manager.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the client user interface enables the user to access the primary contact library.

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42. The method of claim 41, wherein client user interface enables the user to manipulate the primary contact library.

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43. The method of claim 27, wherein the client contact manager allows the user to input security information, upon which input of the security information the client server defines the scope of the user's access authorization.

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44. The method of claim 43, wherein the contact management system provides security and user authentication by features belonging to the group consisting of: digital certificates, Secure Socket Layer, secure shell (SSH), Kerberos authentication, any comparable method for enforcing user authentication and connection security, and a combination thereof.

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45. The method of claim 43, wherein the scope includes viewing contact information.

46. The method of claim 43, wherein the scope includes managing of contact information.

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47. The method of claim 46, wherein the managing of contact information includes at least one of the group consisting of: viewing contact information, deleting contact information, updating contact information, creating contact information, responding to a contact event, initiating a contact event, and a combination thereof.

48. The method of claim 39, wherein at least one of the client virtual menu panels is equipped with a single-step actuation that prompts the client contact manager to initiate a contact event.

49. The method of claim 36, wherein the client user interface allows the user to voice-actuate the client contact manager to initiate a contact event.

50. The method of claim 9, wherein the primary server supports at least one network functionality, each of the at least one network functionality belonging to the group consisting of: a web server, an FTP server, a Gopher server, a network server, and a combination thereof.

51. The method of claim 9, wherein each of the at least one client station is equipped with a network software client.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein the network software client comprises a world-wide web client.

53. The method of claim 52, wherein the web client supports the wireless application protocol (WAP).

54. The method of claim 52, wherein the web client supports handling server-side scripts, handling client-side scripts, integration with a database server, providing visual design tools, providing wizards and templates to

perform tasks comprising generating system query language (SQL) calls to the database, or any combination thereof.

55. The method of claim 52, wherein the world-wide web client comprises a web browser.

56. The method of claim 51, wherein the network software client can operatively interact with a server belonging to the group consisting of: a web server, an FTP server, a Gopher server, a network server, and a combination thereof.

57. The system of claim 9, wherein the primary contact manager categorizes contact information in the primary contact library into a plurality of contact lists.

58. The method of claim 57, wherein each of the contact lists belongs to the group consisting of: an enterprise contact list containing contact information for at least a portion of the enterprise, and an individual contact list containing contact information for at least one individual associated with the enterprise.

59. The method of claim 13 and claim 57, wherein the primary contact manager provides for viewing customization of each of the contact lists, according to the preference set of each of the at least one user.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein the viewing customization is according to a filtering of parameters associated with the respective one of the contact lists, by which filtering the user determines desired features of the respective one of the contact lists to view.

61. The method of claim 59, wherein the viewing customization is according to a sorting of contact information in the respective one of the contact lists, the sorting being according to parameters associated with the respective one of the contact lists.

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62. The method of claim 59, wherein the viewing customization is according to a search of the primary contact library based on at least one criterion associated with contact information contained in the primary contact library.

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63. The method of claim 60, claim 61, or claim 62, wherein each of at least one criterion belongs to the group consisting of: status, priority, date created, date modified, name, text, code, flag, priority, e-mail address, telephone number, fax number, address, and a combination thereof.

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64. The method of claim 63, wherein the primary contact manager monitors the primary contact library according to a predetermined subset of at least one of the parameters.

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65. The method of claim 64, further including executing at least one command, if there is a match to the predetermined subset of the at least one of the parameters.

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66. The method of claim 62, wherein at least one command involves manipulating the primary contact library.

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67. The method of claim 9, wherein the contact management system further supports scalability by allowing for variation in the number of client stations that it integrates.

68. The method of claim 30, wherein the contact management system further supports a client-side functionality belonging to the group consisting of: client-side computer-controlled telephony application, downloading and installing of a client-side software application onto the client server,
- 5 allowing for integration of the client station into any combination of primary or client server-side text-to-speech or interactive voice response technology to allow for audio reading of records and/or voice-activated response to, or updating of, the primary or client-side contact library.
- 10 69. The method of claim 68, wherein the computer-controlled telephony application belongs to the group consisting of: dialing, e-mailing, paging, and a combination thereof.